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30 SEP 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director/Intelligence
SUBJECT: A New Stage in China's Atomic Energy Program

1. The enclosed paper, "Start-up of Nuclear Plant in Communist China May Be Imminent", is forwarded for your information. It has been coordinated with OSI and will be submitted by OSI to the JAEIC for consideration, possibly some time in October. Publication as a CSB or in an OCI medium is not therefore possible at present, and any future publication is dependent upon JAEIC action.

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2. The paper argues, from the analysis [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] that Communist China is about to put into operation either a uranium feed materials plant or a chemical separation plant. It is suggested that the new facility may go into operation in October 1960 or shortly thereafter.

3. One of the chemicals involved, [REDACTED] can be used at different stages of the atomic energy process— [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] On the other hand, Soviet advisors were known to be reviewing plans for a feed materials plant in China in January 1957, and it is not unreasonable to assume that such a plant could be about to begin

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SUBJECT: A New Stage in China's Atomic Energy Program

operation. The third possibility, a chemical separations plant cannot, in the current state of our knowledge about China's progress in the field, be dismissed. But before putting a chemical separation plant into operation, we would expect China to have a feed materials plant and a reactor operating. We have no evidence that this is the case, but their existence might have been successfully concealed. In either case, the evidence suggests that China has made a significant step forward in its atomic energy program.



OTTO E. GUTHE
Assistant Director
Research and Reports

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Division: Materials
Branch: Chemicals

D-R-A-F-T

CURRENT SUPPORT BRIEF

START-UP OF NUCLEAR PLANT IN COMMUNIST CHINA

MAY BE IMMINENT

27 September 1960

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START-UP OF NUCLEAR PLANT IN COMMUNIST CHINA

MAY BE IMMINENT

Recent information

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suggests that a nuclear

plant, probably a uranium feed materials plant but possibly a chemical separations plant, may be put into operation soon, perhaps in October 1960 or shortly thereafter.

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* This refers to a commercial plant rather than to a pilot plant. A feed materials plant processes uranium concentrates to uranium metal for nuclear reactors

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***No consideration is given to the remote possibility that large-scale processing of thorium ores for nuclear fuel, which might use tributyl phosphate, may be conducted at the present time in Communist China.

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The likelihood that

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is largely discounted

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for the following reasons:

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There is reason to believe, however, that

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is for the preparation of uranium feed materials.

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and, therefore, it is not unreasonable to

assume that such a plant could have been built by now and is about to

start operating. Furthermore, since Communist China has been mining

uranium ores since the early 1950's and probably concentrating these ores

in recent years, without exporting, ample raw material is probably now

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available for processing into uranium feed materials.

Although [REDACTED] probably is intended for the preparation of nuclear feed materials, the possibility cannot be excluded that it is destined for use in a chemical separations plant. Before such a plant would be put into operation, however, a feed materials plant and nuclear power or production reactors would be operating.

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Although there has been no evidence to date that facilities of this nature are operating in Communist China, * evidence of such activity might have been successfully concealed. Furthermore, it is conceivable that a feed materials plant, production reactors and a chemical separations plant could have been built between January 1957 and now under a construction program of high priority.

It is possible to estimate the production capacity of a uranium feed materials plant if [REDACTED]

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is known.

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it is improbable that [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] are intended solely for the nuclear energy program.

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Analysts:



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Sources:



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